



1999-2000 Utah Skier Survey

Executive Summary



- The 1999-2000 Utah Skier Survey conducted 1,850 personal interviews on the slopes at each of Utah's 14 ski resorts. In addition, approximately 44,000 individual resort visitors were asked to identify the location of their home in an effort to better understand and identify international visitors.
- Ski resort visitors continue to be predominantly white males. Nearly 95% of visitors were white and women represented less than 30% of total resort visitors.
- Downhill equipment continues to be favored by the majority of resort visitors. 75% of all resort visitors used downhill equipment while only 22% (largely Utah residents) chose snowboarding equipment.
- Over half (52%) of all visitors classified themselves as intermediates. Another 40% consider themselves experts. Among Utah residents, nearly 50% consider themselves experts.
- Utah resident visitors are younger and make less than destination resort visitors. The median age for Utah residents surveyed was 33 and the median income grouping was \$25,000-\$50,000. By contrast, the median age for destination visitors was 38 and the median income grouping was \$100,000-\$125,000.
- Approximately 49% of Utah ski resort visitors were non-residents from other U.S. states. Roughly 3% were international visitors while the remaining 48% of resort visitors were residents of Utah. The gap between resident and non-resident resort visitors has narrowed over the past decade. For example, during the 1990-91 survey, non-residents accounted for roughly 60% of all resort visitors.
- Destination resort visitors are largely from the western states (43%), especially California. The other regions of the U.S. represent fairly equal proportions of resort visitors. The top states are California (22%), Texas (8%), Nevada (6%), New York (6%) and Florida (5%). International visitors most frequently arrive from Western Europe (53%), particularly the United Kingdom (33%). Other top international markets include Canada (13%) and Germany (12%).
- Destination ski resort visitors have a direct economic impact representing \$740 million to Utah's economy. An additional \$436 million is contributed through in-direct impacts for a total contribution of over \$1 billion. Approximately 4,500 jobs were created by the ski industry. The economic impact of destination visitors has increased significantly during the past several years, due in part to a large increase in the number of affluent visitors. For example, the percentage of resort visitors who spent \$200 per night on lodging doubled over three years ago while the percentage of visitors who spent \$400 per night on lodging quadrupled.
- Although a small proportion of Utah resort visitors are huge spenders, the typical destination resort visitor spends about \$273 per day, an inflation adjusted increase of 13% over three years ago.
- The average destination visitor spends 4.3 nights in the state and skis 3.2 days. This represents a slight decrease from three years ago, highlighting an on-going national trend towards shorter vacation trips. Over 70% of all destination visits are planned in a five-month horizon between October and February. 50% are made between November and January.

- Nearly half (48%) of all visitors stay in hotels or motels. Another 29% choose condominiums or vacation homes and 20% stay with friends or family. Nearly 80% of destination visitors traveled to Utah via the airlines.
- Utah continually scores well in performance measurement questions, with over 92% of all destination visitors scoring their Utah experience either a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale. The average score in each category scored above 3 on the scale. Among categories, resort size and terrain, accessibility, customer service and snow conditions ranked the highest. Promotions and packages, ability to get a drink and family entertainment ranked the lowest among all categories.
- The Internet has become a major source in influencing vacation decisions. Roughly two-thirds (67%) of destination visitors indicated they had used the Internet in making their travel plans. The majority of on-line planners seek information regarding snow conditions (76%). A previous Utah visit and friends and family continue to be the top factors in the destination decision-making process.
- The 2002 Winter Olympics will likely have a positive influence on visitors before and after the Games, but many (44%) indicated that crowds and/or higher prices will keep them from vacationing in Utah during 2002.
- Alta was the preferred resort among both resident and destination visitors. Snowbird and Brighton were also favored by Utah resident visitors while destination visitors indicated they liked Park City, Snowbird and Deer Valley.

The 1999-2000 Utah Skier Survey was conducted by Wikstrom Economic & Planning Consultants on behalf of Ski Utah, the Utah Travel Council, the Park City Chamber and Convention Bureau, the Salt Lake Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Salt Lake Airport Authority.